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IMPROVING FOOD INSPECTION



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Canada has one of the best food inspection and regulatory systems in the world.

Canadian consumers are confident that the food they buy is safe and wholesome.

Our trading partners share this confidence, giving the Canadian agri-food industry superior access to international markets.

The *Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)* contributes to human, plant and animal health by inspecting agri-food products to make sure they conform with regulations on safety and wholesomeness. The branch monitors grading for economically significant factors such as yield and quality and also monitors food label compliance and consumer protection from misrepresentation and fraud.

The Agency provides a wide range of services and activities that have given Canadians one of the safest food supply systems in the world. The high quality and security of our food and food supply have earned Canada a world-wide reputation that opens up foreign markets to Canadian food products.

CONTROLLING ANIMAL AND PLANT DISEASE

Canada's reputation for being free from serious foreign animal diseases and plant pests enhances the international marketability of Canadian agri-food products. The Agency supports and manages pest and disease control programs, giving priority to those which best serve the public, such as import inspections and quarantines to prevent the entry of serious foreign diseases and pests into Canada and by controlling or eradicating those which do gain entry. The Branch also works to prevent, control and eradicate domestic animal or plant diseases and pests of economic or human health significance.

SCIENCE-BASED INSPECTION

In health and safety, CFIA works towards international and domestic harmonization of standards. It supports the use of new science-based technologies such as the prevention-based Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) system to enhance existing inspection. HACCP systems are internationally recognized as the most effective means of correcting problems before and during processing, rather than afterwards. The Government of Canada is encouraging all federally registered plants to

adopt the HACCP approach, through a five-year Food Safety Enhancement Program. Inspectors have been trained to help establishments develop their own HACCP plans and to verify and monitor these industry-run systems.

The Government of Canada has provided some \$11 million to help federally registered establishments implement HACCP protocols in small and medium sized plants. This initiative will build upon successes like Caravelle Foods of Brampton, Ontario. The Caravelle Foods processing plant was recently recognized as the first federally-registered establishment in Canada to have a fully operational HACCP system in place.

The federal poultry inspection program is preparing to further incorporate HACCP principles as part of ongoing improvements through the science-based Modernized Poultry Inspection Project (MPIP).

BIOTECHNOLOGY

The recent development of promising new agricultural products through biotechnology prompted the need for new government regulations.

Amended regulations under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the *Feeds, Fertilizers, Health of Animals and Seeds Acts* adopt a consistent approach, providing for health and environmental assessment of new biotechnology products before they are introduced into the market.

The *Federal Framework for Biotechnology* avoids regulatory duplication by using existing legislation and regulatory institutions to clarify responsibilities while maintaining high standards for the protection of human and environmental health.

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

The Government of Canada recently created the Canadian Food Inspection

Agency (CFIA) to consolidate the inspection and animal and plant health services of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Health Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The first step occurred July 1, 1996 when Health Canada's food inspection responsibilities were transferred to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada who now has responsibility for food recalls and the management of food safety emergencies until CFIA is operational.

In April 1997, Inspection staff from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Health Canada joined AAFC Inspectors in the new Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

The new single agency is responsible for setting animal health, plant health, and food quality regulations. The responsibility for setting food safety standards and auditing the enforcement of food safety regulations is being consolidated and enhanced within Health Canada.



Through the CFIA, Canadians are assured of continuing high safety standards and stringent enforcement of food safety regulations. Consolidating services into a single agency makes it easier for industry, provinces, and consumers to deal with the Government of Canada on food inspection matters. For the agri-food industry, the new agency should mean improved effectiveness and efficiency of inspection and quarantine services and an enhanced competitive position both domestically and internationally.

The CFIA will ensure better use of resources. Starting in 1998-99, the elimination of administrative overlap and duplication among departments will save a targeted \$44 million a year without compromising Canada's strong reputation for the quality and efficacy of its food inspection system.

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION SYSTEM

Federal and provincial government representatives are developing an integrated Canadian Food Inspection System (CFIS) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Canada's food inspection system.

Some 77 different federal, provincial and territorial acts and associated regulations govern food in Canada. These include core regulations that apply to all commodities and unique regulatory requirements such as product standards or unique operational standards for specific commodities or industry sectors.

A federal/provincial system will build on the advantages of the new Canadian Food Inspection Agency in terms of streamlining food safety and market access while at the same time respecting the jurisdictions of both levels of governments. The aim is to harmonize standards, develop a common legislative base and apply risk-management principles for a more consistent approach to the inspection and audit of food production and processing across governments and commodities.

While not yet finalized, substantial progress has been made toward a National Dairy Code and CFIS is continuing its work on commodity codes in other areas such as meat, poultry and fish, food transportation and food retail establishments.

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